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NEWS
FROM YOUR MUSEUM
THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

Know your Museum better

No. 50 TORONTO April, 1945

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY CHURCH WOODWORK DONATED TO THE MUSEUM

A beautiful piece of woodwork from a monastic church of northern Italy has been installed in the Royal Ontario Museum through the generosity of Dr. H. J. Cody, President of the University of Toronto. The unit comprises 21 canopied outer stalls, 12 inner stalls arranged in four groups of three with a narrow passage between, and also a great lectern. It was made by Gabriel the Guardian in 1683. The broad, heavy panels are of Italian ("Circassian") walnut. This wood is probably scarce in Europe, at present, as a great deal of it must have gone into rifle butts. The stalls and divisions between the stalls are elaborately carved in a Renaissance design. The Museum has been very fortunate in obtaining these church furnishings. Their value is twofold: they furnish inspiration to the woodworker and designer; they help to make history tangible to the general public.

THE LAKE TROUT IS NOT A LANDLOCKED SALMON

The angling season lies just ahead of us. One of our most popular fish that may be caught by trolling is the lake trout, or, as it sometimes is called, the great lake trout. Queries concerning its proper name and status are directed sometimes to the Royal Ontario Museum. The lake trout occurs in the Great Lakes and in thousands of lakes throughout northern Ontario and other parts of northern Canada. In some lakes it never grows larger than 14 or 15 inches in length; whereas in a number of large lakes, particularly in the Northwest Territories, it reaches a weight of 50 or 60 or even 70 pounds. It also varies in colour from pale to dark green and sometimes almost to black. The flesh, too, varies from a pale cream to a rich salmon pink. These wide variations have given rise to many common names; salmon trout and grey trout are two of the commonest, but local colour variants have been called brown trout and red trout. The practice of calling them salmon and landlocked salmon appears to be growing. We are very much afraid that in some cases, at least, this is a deliberate attempt at deception. Atlantic salmon, native to our province only in Lake Ontario, have been extinct for many years. Landlocked salmon, however, have been introduced from outside the province into a few Ontario lakes and have led to the catching of a number of genuine landlocked salmon. The fact remains that if you catch a "salmon" in Ontario the odds are that it is a lake trout dignified by a locally bestowed name.

THE MUSEUM ISN'T RATIONED

Travel is difficult now. Railroads are overloaded with traffic; tires and gas are rationed. Visit foreign lands as well as Canada in the galleries of the Royal Ontario Museum. It is open on week days, except Monday, 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.; Sundays 2.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.

THE FIVE MILLIONTH VISITOR ARRIVES

C.S.M. E. H. Jeynes, R.C.A.S.C. of Camp Borden, Ontario, and Didsbury, Alberta, was the five millionth person to pass through the turnstiles of the Royal Ontario Museum during its thirty-one years of activity. Our first million was the most difficult to get. Thirteen years passed by before the total attendance reached the million mark. In contrast, our last million piled up in three years. During the First World War, the annual figure was no greater than what we expect now for one month.

On glancing back through the visitors books I find that people from many parts of the world have visited us. I jotted down these place names: Peking, Chungking, Melbourne, Hobart, Sao Paulo, Quito, Bogota, Cairo, Istanbul, Port Elizabeth, Louvain, Amsterdam, Breslau, Vatican City, Oxford, Tunbridge Wells, Dublin, Vancouver, San Francisco, Yellow Grass, Nipissing Junction, Piqua, Mexico City, Baton Rouge and St. John. Royalty—H.R.H. The Duke of Kent and H.R.H. the Crown Princess of Norway have visited us; so have these Governors-General—Lord Willingdon, Lord Bessborough, Lord Tweedsmuir, the Earl of Athlone. I found the name of Miss Ruth Draper, the well-known actress, inscribed in three or four different parts of our book. To us have come explorers, biologists, poets and diplomats, writers and even one character of a book—Miss Eva Bouchard, the Maria Chapdelaine of Louis Hemon's novel. Of most of the five million, unfortunately, we have no record. Their names, like yours, or mine are not public knowledge.

NATURE'S "SUGAR KETTLES"

The sap is running in the maple bush again. In the Royal Ontario Museum are curious reminders of the old iron pots used in boiling down the sap. We refer to the large spherical masses of limy material, known as concretions, that are found abundantly in the sea-made black shales at Kettle Point on Lake Huron. The locality derived its name from these concretions which resemble an inverted sugar kettle of pioneer days. Then, as now, sugar making was one of the chief industries in that locality.

How these concretions which range in diameter from one foot to several feet were formed, is only partly understood. This much is known, however: ground water carrying mineral solutions through the rocks provided the materials. Growth was added in successive layers of mineral matter about a nucleus such as a fossil tooth, a bone, a leaf fragment or even a grain of sand. Such concretions on being broken, show slender prismatic crystals of brown calcite radiating from the centre.

MOVIES FOR CHILDREN DURING EASTER HOLIDAYS

During the Easter holidays moving pictures will be shown in the Museum Theatre each day at 2 oclock, April 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th. The film will be "Dark Rapture." This shows some of the peoples of the Belgian Congo in Africa, including the pygmies building a bridge of vines, and the magnificent Watussi dancers.